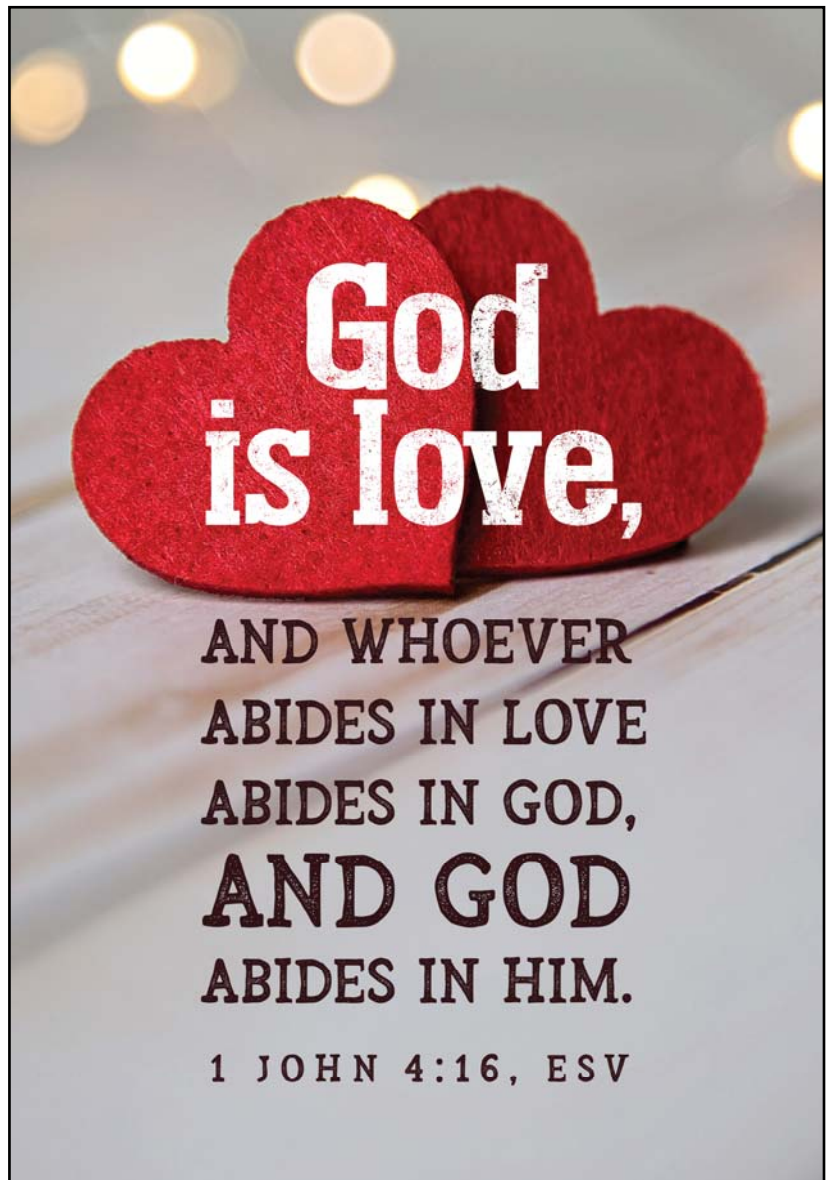




FIRST CHURCH WINDOWS

February 2021



*To see all people **WORSHIP** God,
CONNECT with His people,
and join His **MISSION** in this world.*

Worship the Lord with Us!

Sunday Worship

Live-Streamed Service at 10:00 AM

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, all in-person worship activities are cancelled until further notice.

Please visit www.fumccollingswood.org for our online worship experience.

FIRST CHURCH WINDOWS is published by:

The First United Methodist Church

201 Dayton Avenue, Collingswood, NJ 08108

Phone: (856)858-1186 Fax: (856)858-1775

E-mail: info@fumccollingswood.org

Church Staff

Pastor Sam Mountain, Senior Pastor

(pastorsam@fumccollingswood.org)

Shawn Zook, Pastoral Assistant for Outreach and

Youth (shawn@fumccollingswood.org)

Will Walker, Organist

(will@fumccollingswood.org)

Pat Gunning, Children's Program Director

(pat@fumccollingswood.org)



**Office closed due to the
COVID-19 pandemic.**

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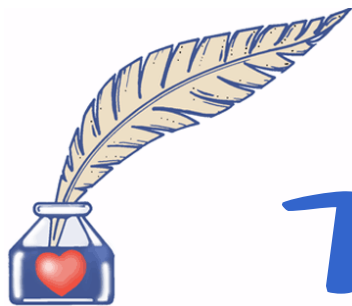


The submission deadline for the *March* issue of Windows is February 26th.

***THANK YOU FOR
SUPPORTING WINDOWS!***



First Church Windows is only available online and in full-color due to the COVID pandemic.



From The Pastor's Heart

FORTY Days OF LENT

It's hard to believe that we are in February and Easter and Lent are around the corner. As part of drawing closer to the Lord, many Christians practice a 40-day journey called Lent. So, while we are not going to as many places as we usually do, we have the opportunity to spend some time to grow in our walk with the Lord and experience with Jesus. During this journey, many often talk about the things they give up for Lent. Some may give up candy or desserts. Others give up food, Wawa coffee, or a fast-food meal (now that Burger King is in town!) Some might even give up a night of TV in order to spend quiet time to honor and draw closer to God.

Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter. The faithful rededicated themselves to Christ and new converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. This month many Christians throughout the world will begin a 40-day journey in remembering what Christ has done for us which leads us to a time of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock. Especially this year with the challenges faced during the pandemic with the challenges in our country and in so many places how we need to experience the presence of Jesus. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days. We often hear the comment made that "I gave it up for Lent" but Lent is much more than giving up a meal or a TV program. It is more about getting in touch with the great love and sacrifice that Jesus made for us and living differently because of His grace.

This fits with our theme of "Experience Jesus." As Apostle Paul shared his experience *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20 ESV) Experiencing Jesus changed and transformed Paul's life for a moment and for eternity. As James writes and recorded in James 4:8. ***"Draw close to God and He will draw close to you."*** What a promise of the presence of God in our lives! As the commercial goes, *"Don't leave home without it!"*

We have put together a sermon series beginning on February 21 to start this journey. This will follow a special Holy (Ash) Wednesday service on February 17 at 7:00 pm. These services will give us a special opportunity to pause and give time to simply draw closer to our Lord in the midst of our busy lifestyles. Our prayer is that hearts and lives will find refreshment and spiritual renewal that only the Lord can bring!

There are many different ways to celebrate Lent. However, I believe, as James shares in his letter, that the end result is that we will grow in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As a staff we also have provided an opportunity for all of us to grow entitled "Experience Jesus Lent 2021." (See page 5.) Please take some time and use this opportunity to grow and experience a deeper relationship with Jesus and with others during this Lenten season. What matters most is that we allow these holy days to draw us closer and challenge us to live a deeper life in Christ.

In Christ's love and Service,
Pastor Sam

EXPERIENCE JESUS: LENT 2021

Every year, Ash Wednesday signifies the beginning of Lent, a 40-day season (not counting Sundays), leading toward Easter Sunday and marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, when he fasted and when Satan tempted Him. Similarly, Lent helps believers to set aside a time each year for fasting, in order to focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection.

Lent is a meaningful way to prepare for Easter. The message of Easter is true whether or not we prepare for it. However, when we take time to intentionally lean into these truths, we can experience a greater measure of the depth and power of Christ's death and resurrection that is available for us. It can also help us to develop necessary practices that will fuel spiritual growth for the rest of our lives.

So, with your Collingswood First Church Family we encourage you to commit yourself to experience Jesus' love and grace in a fresh new way by practicing some of these simple disciplines over the next six weeks. Additionally, it is important to note that we are not meant to do the Christian life alone! We challenge you to pair up with 1-2 other people, and meet/talk weekly with them to share which disciplines you're doing, what you're learning, and pray with each other. Pray through the list below and place an X by the ones you desire or feel prompted to do.

Inward/Personal Disciplines:

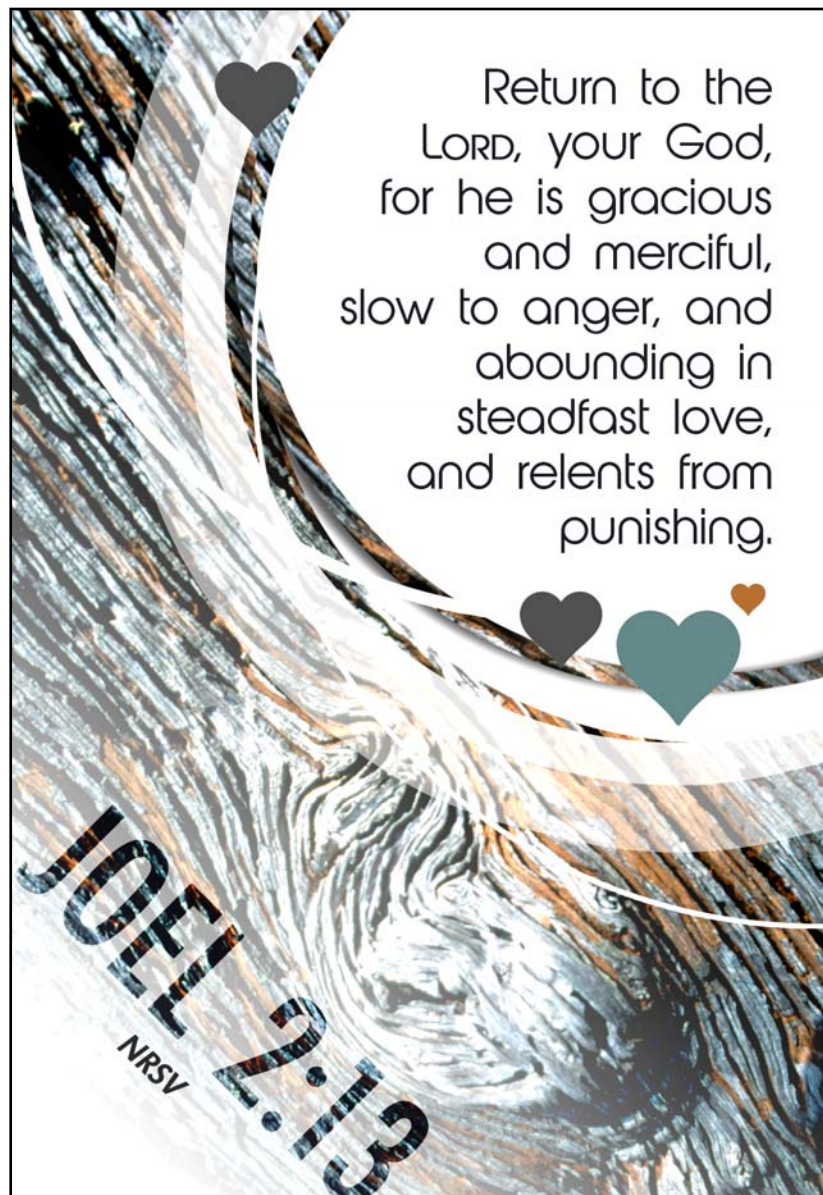
- ☐ Spend time in silence/solitude each day, meditating on God's attributes
- ☐ Read a Lenten Devotional daily
- ☐ Read a book for inner growth.
- ☐ Read through the gospel of Luke.
- ☐ Begin to keep a journal of prayer concerns and praises, or highlights from my Scripture reading.
- ☐ Focus on thanksgiving, rather than on asking, in prayer.
- ☐ Give myself a gift of three hours to do something I always say I don't have time to do.
- ☐ Find a way to go to bed earlier or sleep in so I get enough rest.
- ☐ Make a list of people with whom I need to be reconciled. Pray for them, asking Jesus to change my thinking and feeling toward them. Reach out to them as God prompts you to do so.
- ☐ Take control of my life by _____.
- ☐ Be present at Holy Week services as an act of love and waiting with Jesus.
- ☐ Write out a daily list of my activities, evaluate how I'm spending my time, and plan how I will reorder my priorities.
- ☐ Forgive someone who has hurt me.
- ☐ Fast from a regular part of my life through the Lenten season (Facebook, snacks, watching TV, etc.) and use that time for prayer and Scripture instead.
- ☐ Skip breakfast and lunch once a week and pray during those meal times.



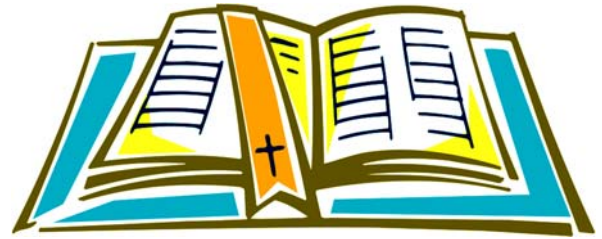
Outward/Social Disciplines:

- ___ Do a loving act of service for a neighbor or family member
- ___ Plan to contact a “shut-in” neighbor or church member weekly.
- ___ Write a letter of affirmation once a week to a person who has touched my life.
- ___ Contact someone at the church to find out how to join a needed ministry or service opportunity
- ___ Go to coffee or dinner with someone I want to know better.
- ___ Say “NO” to something that is a waste of money and time.
- ___ Surrender to the Lord my time, talents and the things I treasure.
- ___ Surrender to the Lord my heart and mind and please Him above all things
- ___ Join or start a small group to grow in Christlikeness through the Word and relationships (safely in person, or virtually.)
- ___ Cut out Starbucks, Wawa, or other place that regularly gets my money, and give that money instead to a local ministry/mission.

We hope and pray that this year you will allow the Lord to guide you through this Lenten season so that you might experience Jesus in a greater or different way than ever before. What Jesus accomplished 2000 years ago still has profound relevance and impact on our lives today! May you experience “exceedingly, abundantly more than you can imagine” (as Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:20-21) as you surrender your life to Him this Lenten season, and may you share that hope with others.



UPCOMING SERMONS AND SCRIPTURES



Let God Have It Series

Join us as we journey together in a trust adventure with the Lord in 2021. We give God what we have in return for what God has for us which is a great way to begin this new year. It is like the after Christmas gift return process; only what we receive has eternal benefits.

February 7	<i>Let God have your Hurts - Embrace Healing/His Presence</i>	2 Corinthians 11:23-27	Communion	Sam
February 14	<i>Let God have your Grief - Embrace Joy</i>	Psalm 30		Sam

Experiencing Jesus Series

On the way to the cross Jesus had a purpose to touch and change lives. Jesus' purpose was not deterred by the many distractions that came His way. I know Jesus did not deal with the pandemic of 2020 or maybe the challenges of 2021 you are facing today and into the future. However, what we learn from Jesus is how He kept focused with his disciples and transformed the people, places and spaces He entered. They were not the same after He passed through. This Lenten season may we not be the same as we fix our eyes on Jesus. May we allow Him to enter the spaces and places of our lives as He did 2000 years ago.

February 17	Holy Wednesday/Ash Wednesday A Time of Reflection and Prayer at 7:00 pm Our Lenten Journey begins with a time of deepening with Jesus.			Sam
February 21	<i>Jesus encounters the Disciples</i>	Acts 4:13		Shawn
February 28	<i>Show me Your Hand</i>	Mark 3 1-6		Sam



Seeking God's Face Week ***February 14th - 21st***

We are putting aside this week for a special time of prayer, meditation and fasting to God so we might know God's mind intimately, know His will for our lives and our church, and for the future. We'll seek Him through:

- ♦ Daily prayer – challenging each to devote 30 minutes a day to prayer for God's will.
- ♦ Wednesday Zoom Prayer and Reflection service – 7:00 PM (Holy Wednesday.) Our Lenten Journey begins...a time of deepening with Jesus.



MISSIONARY MESSAGES



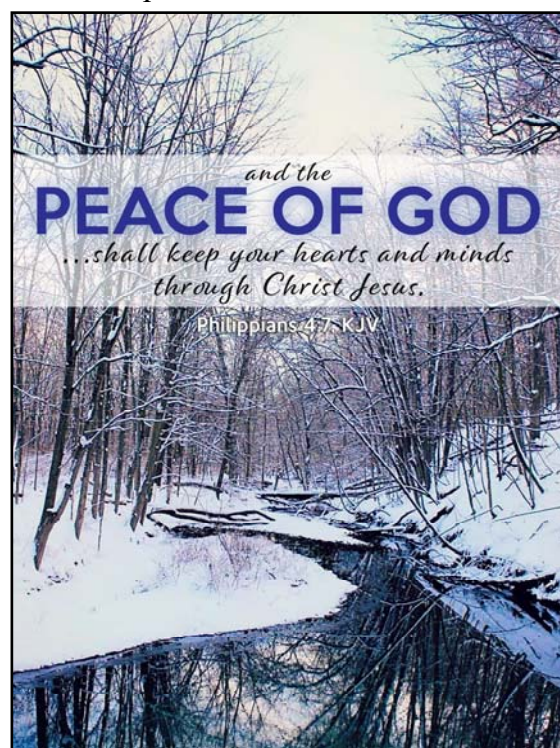
Curt and Carol Detwiler

Welcome to 2021! It's the Monday after the holidays, and for us it means getting back into routines and picking up details. Somehow the details suddenly seem quite fuzzy! "Knowing" that you did something, but then suddenly being unable to find any trace of the final product is confusing! Finding calendar entries of the time you allocated to do something, but then not finding any confirmation that it was done! And finally, finding confirmation of December 2019, only to realize that the December just passed was December 2020, NOT December 2019!! I used to think the challenge was just writing the first 20 checks with the correct year... now at least that is mostly automated! Anyone else having these symptoms?

Meanwhile, the TWR ministry team continued to provide light and hope around the world during the month of December, and God blessed our efforts in many ways. Here are a few items for praise, or for prayers. We thank you for your picking these up in your prayers during the coming days.

PRAYER HIGHLIGHTS:

1. A miracle not to overlook: TWR In Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) was recently granted a license to operate FM stations in the country! Is this a miracle? Well, it seemed like one because our application for that license had been completed and submitted to the government many, many years ago! It was often felt that the country needed FM outlets, not only the AM outlet over in Benin. Different leaders would suggest different tactics to get the license - some urging continuous and "up front" action to try to put pressure on the officials. Other leaders felt that the best approach was to wait... wait upon the leaders, and wait upon the Lord. That approach was ultimately rewarded within the past two months as TWR was granted the license! Now the team in Abidjan can begin the work of setting up our own voice(s) in the country and not depending on other stations to decide whether or not they would include our programs. We will now be able to have our own voice, regularly, faithfully, interacting with listeners and giving them the Gospel. The team also needs to begin the FM project to raise support and begin the training for the staff. Please be in prayer for the workers on these specific teams in West Africa.
2. In another country more centrally located in Africa, this report came to us early in December: Please pray for the team members in this area... there has been an attack against one of our team members who works on the special program for Muslim listeners in that area. (That program has been very effective, impacting many Muslim lives.) The attackers injured the team member's leg and chest as they accused him of disturbing their religion. He was taken to the hospital the next morning by another TWR team member. He was later released, and we are grateful that he is ok and has been recovering in recent days. Please pray for complete recovery for this man, and safety for the team as they continue in this difficult, but fruitful area.



Bob and Barbara Alber

Hitting the ground running!

Thank you for praying us safely to Florida! We spread the trip out over four days with Bob driving the U-Haul (which had no cruise control!) and me (Barbara) driving our car, arriving on Sunday, January 10 with still some energy to spare. A family from the next building (who used to live near us in Texas) saw us pull in to the parking lot and came over to help unload some essentials from the truck. By Sunday night I had my office set up in the second bedroom of our apartment.

With the help of some of Bob's colleagues the rest of the truck was quickly unloaded on Tuesday into a local storage facility. Bob was able to get his office set up on Wednesday. I have already made new friends at a local weekly Bible study and we have discovered a nearby Wawa, a local deli, and an Italian gelato shop, so it already tastes like home!



A home to share

We came to Florida with a very unique set of criteria for our home. Ryne is planning to come live with us along with his four pets (aka cute allergens.) We also wanted to make sure that we had plenty of room for not just our 3 boys, but also for the many guests who have promised to come stay with us now that we live near Disneyworld and the ocean!

So, come be our guest and enjoy all the sights of central Florida. We are so thankful to God for allowing us to find this home so quickly and for all the ways it is just perfect for our needs:

- It is only 20 minutes from Bob's office.
- It's about 90 minutes from my parents.
- It's in a safe neighborhood.
- The upstairs apartment allows Ryne's pets to safely live with us while giving him privacy.
- It allows for Rob and Mark to feel at home here as well.
- It allows room for YOU!

We are thankful to God for:

- Keeping us safe and healthy.
- Giving us a sense of community here.
- Guiding us quickly to our new home.
- Providing the finances needed to make this home affordable.
- Allowing us to jump back into working again so quickly.

Please join us in prayer for:

- Everything to go smoothly with our closing on February 19.
- Ryne as he searches for nearby employment for next year.
- Mark's spring classes and his preparation to switch to a new major.
- Rob as he searches for another job to supplement his restaurant work.

Thank you for your prayers; we have surely felt them! And for your faithful, generous, and sacrificial giving—we humbly thank you!



- | | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Feb. 6 | Jim Doyle
Marilyn Ellis
Sherry Rappe | Feb. 17 | Tom Thompson
Lou VanPelt, Jr. |
| Feb. 7 | Stan Sheaffer | Feb. 18 | Marva Wallace |
| Feb. 9 | Ruthmarie Weinberg | Feb. 20 | Jennifer Schwehm |
| Feb. 10 | Carol Vernon Grant
Will Junglaus | Feb. 22 | Cheryl Aversa |
| Feb. 11 | Julie MacNamara | Feb. 24 | George Hemphill |
| Feb. 16 | Jadon Hamilton
Rose Hamilton | Feb. 26 | Jane Doyle |
| | | Feb. 27 | Megan Bickel
Jennifer Kennedy |

If you have not already done so, please give your dates (birth dates and anniversary dates) to the church office in writing or by e-mail: office@fumccollingswood.org.



?? ?
? ??
Bible Quiz

What was the name of Moses' wife?

- A. Miriam
- B. Jochebed
- C. Zipporah
- D. Leah

Answer: C (See Exodus 2:21.)

Puzzle!

Discover the identity of a biblical person. First, assign a number value to each letter, starting with M=1, N=2, O=3, ... A=15, etc. Then use the code to complete the clues.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
15												1	2	3											

FIRST CLUE: 15 7 15 13 3 9 2 21 1 15 2

22 19 25 23 26 26 19 18 7 3 1 19 3 2 19.

SECOND CLUE: 22 19 11 15 7 8 19 2 18 23 2 21

7 22 19 19 4 23 2 8 22 19 18 19 7 19 6 8

11 22 19 2 21 3 18 17 15 26 26 19 18 22 23 1.

THIRD CLUE: 15 7 15 16 15 16 13 22 19 11 15 7

20 3 9 2 18 20 26 3 15 8 23 2 21 23 2 15

16 15 7 25 19 8 23 2 8 22 19 2 23 26 19 6 23 10 19 6.

Who is this person? _____

Loving embraces

Express your love and friendship with handcrafted bracelets.



What you need:

- Adult help
- Bowl of boiling water
- Wide wooden craft sticks
- Glass cup
- Markers, paint or decorative tape

What you do:

1. Pour about 3 cups of boiling water into a bowl. Soak sticks in the water about 30 minutes.
2. Remove sticks and slowly, gently bend them into a curve.
3. To maintain the shape, place curved sticks inside a glass cup overnight to dry completely.
4. Remove and decorate the bracelets, which make fun Valentine's Day gifts.

Answer: Moses



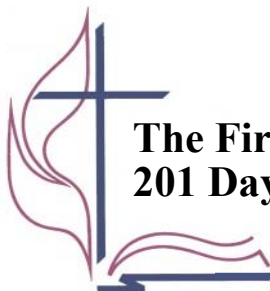
FASTING FROM CRITICALNESS

Most fasting involves temporarily giving up something you enjoy. When you long for a cookie or a favorite show, you instead turn your attention to God, reorienting yourself to his best.

Catherine Marshall, in *A Closer Walk*, presents a different approach she calls fasting from "criticalness." God dealt with her judgmental spirit by prompting her to spend 24 hours without criticizing "anyone about anything." At first, Marshall felt rather empty when she didn't engage in a heated political debate. But friends and family didn't seem to miss her comments. Plus, God replaced the energy she'd spent attempting to correct others with energy and creativity to positively influence them.

A critical spirit can make us lose perspective, joy and even relationships. It also can prevent the good work God wants to achieve through us. Consider what could happen as a result of your own "criticalness fast." Pray for God to do the correcting while you focus on building up others.

—Janna Firestone



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